

Of all the Afro-pop groups to emerge over the past decade Mahlathini and the Mahotella Queens are one of the most exciting. Their Mbaqanga jive is a blend of wondrous harmonies by the Queens with Mahlathini delivering gruff leads while the Makgona Tshole Band (The Band That Knows Everything) delivers mesmerizing polyrhythms with guitars and keyboards dancing around each other. The band or the singers alone are would be enough, but seen and heard together with traditional dances and in full costume they put on a show that's beyond amazing and not soon forgotten.

Mahlathini and the Mahotella Queens: Sun., Feb. 16 at 8 p.m. at the Painted Bride Art Center, 230 Vine St., \$15, 925-9914.

--Peter Brown